

Abstract

Recently, there has been a rapid rise in educational censorship efforts in Missouri and nationwide. There have been escalating book bans in Missouri schools accompanied by conservative backlash against diversity initiatives and manufactured outrage over Critical Race Theory (CRT). While public opinion opposes banning books, legislative efforts surrounding Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Critical Race Theory initiatives have contributed to the rapid increase of bans. Conservative media misrepresents critical race theory to justify censorship in all academic settings. Postsecondary education faces unique challenges, with proposed bans on DEI initiatives threatening accreditation, academic freedom, and quality of education. With bans accelerating, the path forward remains uncertain as divisive policies displace learning in both K-12 and higher education environments.